

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

SOME MODERN THINKERS.

ESSAYS ON SOME OF THE MODERN GUIDES OF ENGLISH THOUGHT IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

By RICHARD HOLT HUTSON. 12mo., pp. 382. Macmillan &amp; Co.

This volume contains essays upon Carlyle, Cardinal Newman and Matthew Arnold, George Eliot, and Frederic Denison Maurice. The author has a reputation as an critic which these papers, collected now from some periodicals in which they originally appeared, to some extent sustain. His standards are conservative. He is never brilliant and seldom deep. A strong respect for conventionalities pervades his thought. It is probable that he quite misunderstands such minds as Carlyle's and Matthew Arnold's, and questionable whether he has fathomed the character of Cardinal Newman. The essay in which he contrasts the two great Oxford thinkers is ingenious and, in some respects, striking, but the paradoxes which perplex him arise rather from his own limitations than from the inherent difficulties of the situation. Newman and Arnold are types representing strongly differentiated intellectual constitutions, and Mr. Holt Hutton himself evidently belongs in one of these two categories so unmistakably as to be scarcely capable of comprehending the other. The order of mind that demands the spiritual repose only attainable by implicit confidence in authority can neither understand nor be understood by the order of mind to which the need of certitude is a vital one. The former cannot endure the ceaseless dubitation which the zealous quest of first-hand truth entails. The latter cannot tolerate the apparent satisfaction with incertitude which characterizes the tranquility of the former.

Matthew Arnold, more than any man of his day, represented the strongest tendencies of that Zeitgeist he wrote of so much. The peculiarity of his culture was that it blended the boldest innovations of rationalistic criticism with an inherited spirit of reverence owing nothing to intellectual processes. He was sceptical because his education made him so. He was imbued with a strong reverential feeling, because he came of Christian ancestry. Hence, too, the apparent inconsistency in his criticism. Holding intellectually the same doctrines with Herbert Spencer, it was not possible for him to relegated the whole supernatural question to the realm of the unknown, and there leave it. He was impelled by heredity to postulate the "stream of tendency" not ourselves which makes for righteousness." In fact Matthew Arnold marked a transition point in modern thought; he stood for the middle stage of change, in which the influence of the past, too much weakened to control the present, retains force enough to check the development of the new philosophy and to involve its more conservative exponents in contradictions. Cardinal Newman on the other hand typifies the ultra-conservative element, which prefers unverified assurances to distracting inquiries, which consequently puts itself in opposition to the former. The contention between these types is as inevitable as the contrast between Ormuzd and Ahriman. It is at bottom, however disguised, the struggle between materialism and spirituality, a struggle which must last as long as radical differences of mental constitution permit.

Mr. Holt Hutton's criticism on the two great Oxford thinkers, however, is concerned chiefly with externals. He never penetrates to the primary causes of the difference between them. His essays on Carlyle and George Eliot are, however, quite interestingly incomplete. There is indeed a certain tone in his remarks, which Mr. Newell Arnold would have apt to ascribe to anaborist Philistinism triumphing over culture. The essays are undoubtedly pleasant reading, and exhibit a mild shrewdness and gift of surface analysis. But they do not go to the root of the matter, and they remain evidence enough of the writer's narrowness of scope to render any further inquiry into the reason of their insufficiency quite superfluous.

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